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ABSTRACT

An exploratory study was conducted to define and differentiate interruptions structurally and tactically. The participants were 60 college students assigned to female-female, female-male, and male-male conversational dyads. The dyadic conversations were recorded for 14 minutes, during a period of "getting to know each other" and during a task of agreeing on the rank order of a list of behaviors. Dyad type was found to have a significant effect on the occurrence of particular types of interruptions. The female-female pairs were more likely to allow interruptions that lasted a substantial period of time without necessarily changing speakers. Female-male dyads exhibited the most proportionate use of "back channel" interruptions (conventional signals of attention to continuous discourse). Females were more likely to engage in interruptions of greater length, where there was no exchange of turns, while males were more likely to engage in interruptions where there was an exchange of the speaking turn. Dyad type correlated with interruption tactics, with more topic changes and connections (bringing together two entities or separate parts) occurring in dyads where males were present. A pattern of interruption behavior emerged indicating that once an interruptive behavior occurred, it became established in that conversation and was repeated for a time. (RL)

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INTERRUPTIONS: STRUCTURE AND TACTICS IN DYADIC CONVERSATIONS

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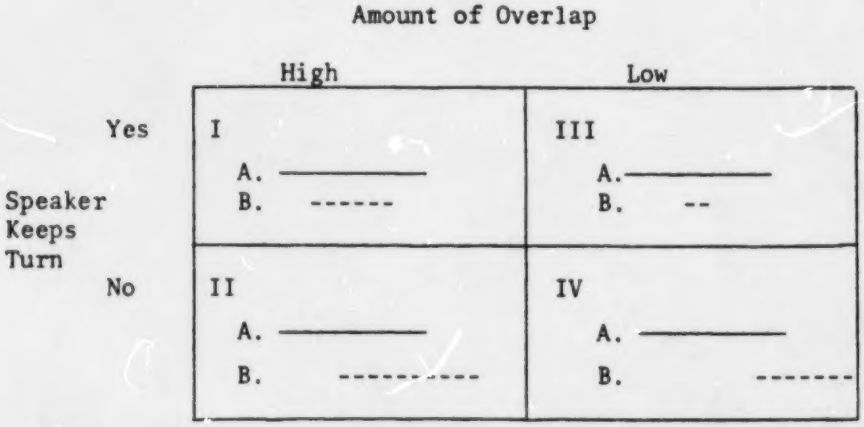
The word "converse" is derived from two Latin elements: "con" and "vertere", which mean to turn together in a continuing process of reversal (Allen and Guy, 1974). It is this characteristic of talk which is an intrinsic part of ongoing conversations. People talk: first one speaks, then another, and so on[1]. Participants in a conversation generally accomplish this mutual exchange of the speaker and auditor roles in a coordinated manner with each member taking her or his turn at the appropriate time.

Often, however, this transition is not accomplished smoothly and there are overlaps in speaking turns, or the speaker is cut off in mid-turn. These non-regularities in turns are known as interruptions, and they generally have been defined in the literature as being of one type: they cut off the speaker and allow the interruptor to speak. However, interruptions are not all the same, for they exhibit marked variability and can be differentiated along two dimensions: length and turn-taking outcome.

The first dimension, length, concerns the amount of time when both participants are talking following the interruption. This has been called "simultaneous speech" (Markel, et al., 1970), or "simultaneous vocalization" (Rogers and Jones, 1975). Similar approaches have called this a case of "double action" (Saslow, et al., 1957), and, also, "talking before the other has stopped" (Shaw and Sadler, 1965). The second dimension is the turn-taking outcome. The interrupted speaker may yield the floor or continue to hold it. This dimension is concerned with who "wins", or retains access to the time-related resources of the conversation (Meltzer and Morris, 1971; Rogers and Jones, 1975).

No one, however, has emphasized the two dimensions in one approach, and they both are important aspects of conversational coordination. The typology in Figure 1 attempts to bring together these two dimensions.

FIGURE 1 - Four types of interruption, by extent of simultaneous speech and turn-taking outcome.



In the above typology, Type One interruptions are those which occur when the interruptor starts to talk while the original speaker is still talking. The original speaker, however, manages to retain the floor and the interruptor eventually yields and becomes an auditor again. The interruption can be any one of a number of possible lengths, although it is longer than a Type Three interruption.

Type Two interruptions are similar to Type Threes for there is a period of simultaneous speech when the interruptor as well as the original speaker are both talking. In the Type Two interruption, however, the original speaker eventually relinquishes the floor.

Type Three interruptions are those which occur when the auditor briefly changes to the speaker state while the original speaker is still talking. The length of the interruption is quite short, one-to-two words, and the outcome is the continuation of the original speaker. This type of interruption has been referred to as "conventional signals of attention to continuous discourse" (Duncan and Fiske, 1977), and "back channels, over which the person who has

the turn receives short messages such as 'yes' and 'uh huh' without relinquishing the turn" (Yngve in Duncan and Fiske, 1977).

A Type Four interruption has an outcome similar to that of Type Two, for the original speaker relinquishes the floor. In this case, though, the speaker yields immediately, with the interruptor becoming the speaker, and the speaker the auditor. This is the most common definition of interruption, and the one most referred to when that term is used.

Participants in a conversation not only share the time available, they also share their ideas. Interruptions have generally been seen as an impediment to this idea sharing (Sacks, et al., 1971; Zimmerman and West, 1975), and as functioning in the communication exchange primarily as a sharing of the resource of time. Essentially the tactical component of communication, the methods by which ideas come to be shared have been ignored.

It is these two aspects of the interruption -- structure and tactic -- which must be first separated before it is investigated if we are to better understand the interruption and its place in the conversation. When one examines the literature, though, it is these two dimensions which are most confounded. Markel, et al. (1970), and Zimmerman and West (1975) have equated the use of an interruption with dominating behavior, and Shaw and Sadler (1965) have "presumed" that the content of the interruption was "supportive".

In actuality, it can be seen that each interruption does both of these things -- it can facilitate the turn-taking and it may facilitate some form of idea-sharing. Although prior emphasis has been on the underlying idea of "who's winning", idea sharing involves much more than dominating or supporting. When one looks at conversations one sees many tactical behaviors. An individual offers an idea, makes an inquiry and the other person can either follow along, or not. The notion of individuals moving together or moving apart as the conversation proceeds could be as useful as the "dominance" concepts.

When interruptions are looked at as a form of coordinating behavior, then it can be most useful to examine those tactics which can facilitate the turn-taking and idea-sharing, and help to understand interruptions in terms of whether ideas are shared or not. The three tactics chosen are behavioral[2]; they speak more directly than the past literature to the concept of idea sharing. Those tactics which seem most pertinent to this notion are topic changing, connecting and agreeing.

Changing the topic notifies the other person of a new direction (and that the other should follow along). It can operate in the conversation as a control device. It can be a facilitation mechanism, renewing and invigorating the discussion so that participants maintain interest in the conversation, and in each other as conversants. Topic changing provides a clear break in the conversation's content and sends it off in a new direction.

Connecting is a tactic which involves bringing together two entities or separate parts. Finishing a sentence of the previous speaker can be a form of connecting. It can be conversationally facilitative, for it directly links utterances, and indicates a form of a tactical tying procedure which individuals use to build conversations. Another form of the connecting tactic is repeating, which is a reuse of a behavior. Verbally repeating the previous speaker's utterance, either in entirety or in part, is one option in conversational behavior, and can promote conversational flow by showing continued interest in, and attention to, the other participant.

Agreeing is seen as offering approval, verbal agreement about, or understanding of, the speaker's utterances. Agreeing can be defined in functional terms as "a short verbal element which sustains the sequence of assertions, or more generally, the flow of verbal action" (Allen and Guy, 1974, p. 50). It can indicate to the speaker that the auditor is still listening and following

the speaker, and that being in a "state of talk" is mutually satisfactory.

Thus, interruptions exhibit varying structures and also may "carry" tactics which can facilitate idea-sharing. Separating structure and tactic, however, does not suffice for an understanding of interruptions, since all conversations occur in some place, at some time, and between particular individuals with different interests, intent, and capabilities. Talk is very much rooted in the "here-and-now", and situations can vary. The social context can make certain characteristics of the individual more salient; or conversely, individual characteristics can affect the social, or mutually-defined "rules" of the situation.

A situational factor which has been noted as having "made a difference" in interactions is sex of participants. Allen and Guy (1974), Dethman (1975), and Kanter (1977), have noted that males behave differently when talking to females than to males, and Markel et al. (1970), found that when simultaneous speech occurs in a female-male or a female-female dyad, it lasts longer than when it occurs in a male-male dyad. It seems that sex of participant does affect, to some degree, the social interaction between individuals.

Conversations also occur over time, and can be seen as a series of units which occur, one after the other. An event occurs, and since it occurs in a sequence, then what occurs next, the following event, can be seen as a consequence of what occurred earlier. That portion of the conversation that follows an interruption can also be looked at as the consequences of that interruption, and it is possible to look at whether the occurrence of an interruption led to more interruptions, or not.

METHODS

Thirty dyadic tapes of volunteers from an introductory communications class, which were collected by Dervin and Dethman (1975), formed the basic resource for this study[3]. To locate the interruption event each tape was carefully

listened to by the coder, along with the transcription of the tape. For coding purposes an interruption was defined as any overlap in turns in the conversation, i.e., any point in the stream of talk where more than one person was speaking. When an overlap occurred, that spot was pinpointed as an interruption. The tape was then carefully listened to again, sometimes as many as ten additional times, so that the physical dimensions of the overlapping interruption was evident, and the interruption could be categorized as a particular type[4].

The transcription was retyped to reflect the structure of the interruption, and then coded for tactics associated with the interruption by asking a series of questions about a specific utterance in relation to the previous one. Coding for topic changing was accomplished by asking: does the contribution change the object itself, introduce a new object, change the object into an attribute, change the attribute into a new attribute, or into an object. If the answer to any of the above questions was positive, then the interruption was counted as a topic change. Coding the connecting tactic was accomplished by asking if an interruption in whole or in part finished a sentence, or repeated the previous sentence, and the agreeing tactic was determined by asking if the contribution in whole or in part contained an agreement.

The amount and type of each interruption that followed an interruption was determined by simply locating the interruption, and then counting the number of total interruptions in the next eight contributions, as well as the number of each type of interruption. Eight contributions, four for each participant, were felt to be sufficient to establish a consequence unit of adequate size in which occurrence of interruptions after a particular interruption could be determined.

Sex of participant, the situational factor, was examined in two ways: by looking separately at the behavior of each sex, and by looking at dyad type. Dyad type was established by randomly assigning participants to one of three

types of dyads: female-female, female-male, and male-male. An equal number of females and males were selected for the study so that the result was ten dyads of each type, with a total of thirty dyads, two-thirds being same sex, and one-third being opposite sex.

Participants met, were seated, were instructed to "get to know each other", and the tape recorder was then turned on. The investigator left the room, and returned at the end of seven minutes. Next, participants were given a list of behaviors which they rank-ordered individually, and then were asked to come to a consensus on that ordering. The experimenter again turned on the tape recorder, left the room, and returned at the end of seven minutes. Thus, thirty tapes of 14 minutes each were collected.

A one-way analysis of variance, fixed effects model with unequal cell N's was used. Within table means were tested using the conservative Scheffe's test for a posteriori difference between cell means (Nie, et al., 1975). Analysis of variance was used even though this method generally requires that the dependent variable be measured on the interval scale. However, "any dichotomy can be treated as though it was an interval-level measure, and in some cases even a ratio-level variable" (Nie, et al., 1975). Mathematically, the requirements of ordering are satisfied by the 0,1 values even though a rank order is not evident in this ordering. Therefore, the dichotomous variables used in this study as criterion variables, e.g., topic changing, not topic change, etc., were considered metric-level variables[5].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this exploratory study was to more clearly define and differentiate interruptions structurally and tactically while investigating some of the occurrences and consequences of interruptions in a particular situation. Results

will be presented in terms of influences on, rather than hypotheses about, interruption occurrence.

Dyad type, that is, who speaks to whom, was found to have a significant influence on occurrence of particular interruption types. Female-female dyads were discrepant from both female-male and male-male dyads. In general, results showed that the female-female pairs were more likely to allow interruptions to occur which lasted a substantial period of time, and did not necessarily result in a change of speakers.

TABLE 1 about here.

The results supported the notion that it may be more socially permissible for women to speak for a simultaneously extended period of time. The fact that the mixed dyads used this interruption least often (and significantly less than female-female dyads), supported the idea that of all three dyad types, the most constraints existed for the mixed sex dyads.

In addition, mixed sex dyads showed the most proportionate use of Type Three or "back channel" interruptions. This suggested that this kind of interruption may be utilized as a kind of regulator in the interaction. Since greater actual differences existed in mixed sex dyads with all the concomittant differences in prior socialization, then the potential for emerging divisiveness and conflict was continually present. The Type Three interruption may be a way to alleviate the problem, to indicate, "I'm paying attention, what you say is important, go ahead and talk".

Sex of the interruptor was a significant influence on interruption type for two of the types. Results show that females were more likely to engage in interruptions of greater length, where there was no exchange of turns, while males were more likely to engage in interruptions where there was a clear breaking off and exchange of the speaking turn.

TABLE 2 about here.

Thus, women seemed to favor interruptions which involved more simultaneous speech, which was not so abrupt and which may connote a kind of "working together". Men, on the other hand, used more interruptions which clearly cut off the speaker, a finding consistent with earlier research (Zimmerman and West, 1975; Key, 1975). This consistent, and therefore reliable, finding seemed to point to certain behavior patterns which operate in social interaction.

Dyad type was a significant influence on the interruption tactic in the interruption. In general, female-female dyads were discrepant from both female-male and male-male dyads. Results indicated that more of the topic changing and connecting tactic occurred in those dyads where males were present: male-male and female-male. However, more of the agreeing tactic occurred in same sex dyads: female-female and male-male.

TABLE 3 about here.

The prevalence of topic changing in dyads where males were present replicates previous findings (Zimmerman and West, 1975), where this tactic was found to occur when males interrupted females. Topic changing was a tactic which can exert strong control on conversational direction and the use of this by males points to "rights of speakership", for the interrupted female seemed to have limited rights to contribute to topic development.

Sex of the interruptor had a significant influence on the tactic of the interruption only for topic changing. The greater use of topic changing as a tactic of the interruption is, again, seen to be exhibited by males.

TABLE 4 about here.

As seen in Table 2, there was more topic changing in those dyads with males in them, and when interruption tactic was broken down by sex the phenomenon becomes even more striking. Males as a total group seemed to use interruptions

as a way of changing the topic, and again as a potential method of maintaining conversational control. So that it is not simply the interruption itself which can assert "dominance" in a conversation, but the interruption combined with a specific tactical behavior.

Type of interruption had a significant influence on the type of tactic which occurred in that interruption. Results indicated that there were significant differences in the occurrence of topic changing between all four interruption types, with that tactic more likely to occur in those interruptions which lasted a period of time and resulted in speaker exchange, and less likely to occur in the short "back channel" interruptions. Agreeing was significantly more likely to occur in the back channel interruptions and less likely to happen in any of the other three types.

TABLE 5 about here.

Thus, interruption type seemed to affect the type of tactic associated with it. Topic changing seemed to be accomplished primarily in Type Four interruptions (——-—), connecting in Type Two interruptions (—— - —), and agreeing in Type Three interruptions (—— — —). This suggested that the structure and the tactic of the interruption work in somewhat reciprocal ways. Topic changing, which is an abrupt change in the conversational direction, is implemented primarily through an equally abrupt structure (Type Four interruption); and vice versa, the abrupt structure of the Type Four interruption provides a format by which the topic changing can occur. Connecting, a tactic which ties together separate utterances, was implemented by a similar structure, Type Two interruptions, whose form also ties together separate utterances. Agreeing, a supportive tactic, was implemented through a Type One interruption, whose structure allows the agreeing to provide that support in an unobtrusive, and indeed, supportive manner.

Type of interruption was a significant influence of both the total number and type of interruption in the consequence unit. Results indicate that after an interruption with simultaneous speech and an exchange of speakers there were more interruptions in the consequence unit. There were also significantly more Type Four interruptions (clearly cutting off of the speaker in the consequence unit after a Type Four interruption in the interruption event).

TABLE 6 about here.

Significantly more Type Three interruptions (the short "back channels") occurred in the consequence unit after a Type Three interruption. However, Scheffe's between means test failed to indicate significant differences between groups, although the more liberal Duncan's test did show a difference. There appeared to be a tendency for an interruption type to occur, and then establish a kind of repetitive pattern, for after each interruption type there were significantly more of that type to appear in the consequence unit (except for Types One and Three interruptions, which still showed a higher occurrence after that same type of interruption).

SUMMARY

Cutting across these findings several major points emerge. First, not all situational factors have an equal effect on interruption behavior. Interruptions seem susceptible to those interactive variables which emphasize the reciprocal nature of a conversation. The particular characteristics of an individual, such as their sex, had less of an effect on interruption behavior than the sex of the speaker in relation to the sex of the other participant. It seemed that the fluctuation in interactions, the reciprocity which existed between individuals as they conversed, affected interruptions to a greater extent than the more internal and personal variables. Who one spoke to was more important than who one was, at least in terms of interruptions as they occurred in on-going conversations.

A second point is that the structure and tactic of the interruption appeared to work in reciprocal ways. Particular tactics seemed to be accomplished in types of interruptions whose structure or form most facilitated that tactic. For example, topic changing, which is a change in conversational direction, was accomplished primarily through that interruption type which most quickly and abruptly changed the turn. Connecting, a tactic which functions as a means of tying together separate contributions, was most often implemented by the similar form of those interruptions which physically tied together separate utterances. And agreeing, a supportive tactic, was generally accomplished by those interruptions whose structure permitted the agreeing to take place without disturbing the speaker, and without a demand for an exchange of turns. Thus, a sort of mirroring seemed to occur between structure and tactic: the tactic was accomplished by an interruption behavior which was similar to the tactic, and conversely, the interruption was more likely to be associated with a tactic which was similar to it.

This tendency for a particular behavior to lead to more of the same behavior points out a third theme to emerge from the study. When an interruption occurred there was a strong tendency for that type of interruption to occur again in the following part of the conversation. A pattern of interruption behavior emerged which indicated that once a behavior occurred, it became, in a sense, established in that conversation and could, for a time, be perpetuated within that interaction. This behavioral persistence suggests a tendency toward a type of stability, or even the establishment of some form of normative behavior in the conversational process on a "micro-behavioral" level. The discrete events which occurred in an interaction did so over a period of time, one small behavior leading to another, and so on. Thus, it is the occurrence and then reoccurrence of small behaviors which can lead to the inclusive "feeling" about the interaction by the

participants. This pattern which occurred in the case of interruptions may exist for other conversational behaviors as well, and would be worthy of further exploration.

TABLE 1

Dyad type within which interruption occurred as an influence on interruption type.

Criterion	Mean proportion of all interruption in:[c] Female/ Female	Male/ Male	Female Male	F	df	p
Mean Interruption Type						
1. _____	.07[b]	.03[a]	.05[ab]	6.88	2/1918	<.001
2. _____	.10[b]	.07[ab]	.04[a]	10.76	2/1918	<.001
3. _____	.45[a]	.49[ab]	.55[b]	7.05	2/1918	<.001
4. _____	.38[a]	.41[a]	.36[a]	1.53	2/1918	ns
n of interruption	551	567	801			

ab This refers to Scheffe's (1959) a posteriori multiple comparison text which examines all possible combinations of group means to determine exactly which are significant. Like subscripts indicate means that were not significantly different at $p<.05$. Unlike subscripts indicate significant differences.

c The means here come from dichotomous variable, 0 = no, 1 = yes, tapping whether a given interruption was of a given interruption type, e.g., a mean of .45 means that 45% of the interruptions in the Female-Female dyads were of Type One.

TABLE 2

Sex of interruptor as an influence on interruption type.

Criterion	Proportion of all interruptions by:[c] Female	Male	F	df	p
Mean Interruption Type					
1. _____	.06[b]	.03[a]	8.23	1/1918	<.01
2. _____	.07[a]	.05[a]	2.57	1/1918	ns
3. _____	.51[a]	.50[a]	.26	1/1918	ns
4. _____	.35[a]	.41[b]	6.81	1/1918	<.01
	n = 998	n = 921			

ab This refers to Scheffe's (1959) a posteriori multiple comparison text which examines all possible combinations of group means to determine exactly which are significant. Like subscripts indicate means that were not significantly different at $p<.05$. Unlike subscripts indicate significant differences.

c The means here come from dichotomous variable, 0 = no, 1 = yes, tapping whether a given interruption was of a given interruption type, e.g., a mean of .51 means that .51% of the interruptions in the Female-Female dyads were of Type One.

TABLE 3

Dyad type within which interruption occurred as an influence on interruption tactic.

Criterion	Female/ Female	Male/ Male	Female/ Male	F	df	p
	Proportion of all interruptions in:[c]					
Interruption Tactic						
Mean Topic Changing	.18[a]	.25[b]	.25[b]	4.82	2/1918	<.01
Mean Connecting	.09[a]	.13[ab]	.14[b]	4.19	2/1918	<.05
Mean Agreeing	.47[a]	.49[a]	.42[a]	3.53	2/1918	<.05
	n = 551	n = 567	n = 801			

ab This refers to Scheffe's (1959) a posteriori multiple comparison text which examines all possible combinations of group means to determine exactly which are significant. Like subscripts indicate means that were not significantly different at p <.15. Unlike subscripts indicate significant differences.

c. The means here come from dichotomous variable, 0 = no, 1 - yes, tapping whether a given tactic was of a given tactic type, e.g., a mean of .18 means that of those interruptions which occurred in the Female-Female dyads, 18% involved the topic changing tactic. Since the tactics are treated as separate variables and are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, column percentages do not, of course, total 100%.

TABLE 4

Sex of interruptor as an influence on interruption tactic type.

Criterion	Proportion of all interruptions by:[c] Female	Male	F	df	p
Interruption Tactic	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
Mean Topic Changing	.20[a]	.26[b]	10.56	1/1918	<.05
Mean Connecting	.11[a]	.13[a]	2.44	1/1918	ns
Mean Agreeing	.45[a]	.45[a]	.02	1/1918	ns
	n = 998	n = 921			

ab This refers to Scheffe's (1959) a posteriori multiple comparison text which examines all possible combinations of group means to determine exactly which are significant. Like subscripts indicate means that were not significantly different at p <.05. Unlike subscripts indicate significant differences.

c The means here come from dichotomous variable, 0 = no, 1 = yes, tapping whether a given tactic was of a given tactic type, e.g., a mean of .20 means that of those interruptions which were made by females, 20% involved the topic changing tactic. Since the tactics are treated as separate variables and are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive percentages do not, of course, total 100%.

TABLE 5

Interruption type as an influence on interruption tactic.

Criterion	Proportion of all interruptions which were:[e] Type One	Type Two	Type Three	Type Four	F	df	p
Mean Interruption Tactic							
Topic Changing	.19[b]	.34[c]	.02[a]	.49[d]	248.05	3/1918	<.001
Connecting	.16[b]	.27[b]	.05[a]	.18[b]	32.77	3/1918	<.001
Agreeing	.21[a]	.24[a]	.69[b]	.21[a]	192.88	3/1918	<.001
	n = 95	n = 122	n = 968	n = 734			

abcd This refers to Scheffe's (1959) a posteriori multiple comparison text text which examines all possible combinations of group means to determine exactly which are significant. Like subscripts indicate means that were not significantly different at p <.05. Unlike subscripts indicate significant differences.

e The means here come from dichotomous variable, 0 = no, 1 = yes, tapping whether a given interruption was of a given tactic type, e.g., a mean of .02 means that of those interruptions which were type one, .02% involved topic changing as a tactic. Since the tactics are treated as separate variables and are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, column percentages do not, of course, total 100%.

TABLE 6

Interruption type an influence on number and type of interruption in the consequence unit.

Criterion	Type One	Type Two	Type Three	Type Four	F	df	p
Mean Number of[d] Consequence Interruptions	2.24[a]	2.58[a]	2.40[a]	2.66[a]	5.22	3/1918	<.01
Mean Number Which Were Type One	.16[a]	.13	.11[a]	.12[a]	.94	3/1918	ns
Mean Number Which Were Type Two	.14[a]	.32[c]	.12[a]	.19[b]	9.32	3/1918	<.001
Mean Number Which Were Type Three	1.18[a]	1.17[a]	1.34[a]	1.21[a]	2.70	3/1918	<.05
Mean Number Which Were Type Four	.76[a]	.96[a]	.83[a]	1.12[b]	10.68	3/1918	<.001
	n = 96	n = 122	n = 968	n = 734			

abc This refers to Scheffe's (1959) a posteriori multiple comparison text which examines all possible combinations of group means to determine exactly which are significant. Like subscripts indicate means that were not significantly different at $p < .05$. Unlike subscripts indicate significant differences.

d The means here indicate the average number of interruptions which occurred in the consequence unit (8 contributions). For example, a mean of 2.40 indicates that an average of 2.40 interruptions occurred in that consequence unit.

e The means here indicate the average number of a particular of interruption which occurred in the consequence unit. For example, a mean of 1.34 indicates that an average of 1.34 type one interruptions occurred in that consequence unit.

FOOTNOTES

1. This specification for two-party talk has been characterized as a basic rule for conversations -- one party at a time (Schegloff, 1968), and may even constitute a "linguistic universal" due to neurophysical limitations of the information processing abilities of the human nervous system (Jaffee and Feldstein, 1970).

2. I am indebted to Carter (1974) who has proposed that behavior can be broken down into "behavior molecules" and that it can be conceptualized in terms of separate units, or behavioral, observable tactics.

3. Dyadic data was considered sufficient for investigating the dynamics of ongoing communications processes. With one individual all communication must by necessity be intrapersonal, but with only one other person communication becomes interpersonal, social intercourse develops, and all of the communication processes which increase in complexity as the group size grows (dyad, triad, small group, large group, subculture, society) have their foundation in the simple interaction of two individuals.

4. A ten percent interjudge coding reliability check was made for all variables using Stempel's (1955) index. The percentage of agreement for the existence of an interruption was 88%, and for agreement of interruption type it was 89%. In addition, Scott's (1955) measure of interjudge reliability was used on those variables which were dichotomously coded.

5. Lunney (1969) and Hsu and Feldt (1970) found that analysis of variance was appropriate for dichotomous data when cell frequencies were equal, and especially when the total number of observations or the degrees of freedom for the error term were large. The sample size for this study was quite large, 1919 observations, which provides a large number of degrees of freedom for the error term.

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